

## PACKAGE THOUGHTS

How many US & Vietnamese casualties when this given to President Nixon?

- Some mention of phase II in regards to ARVN - 402

Politically the enemy's prospects are brighter; despite some surface calm in the SVinese political system, it is a changing & highly fragile device.

The GVN political system as it is now is probably inadequate for a pol confrontation with the enemy. SV leadership remains divided & uninspiring. The Vese nationalists have no nat'l pol organization to match the Coms. Without an effective pol org, the lower level & local nat'list leadership is vulnerable to disintergration if the tide should appear to be moving in favor of the coms. Further, there is no large disciplined GVN structure in the rural areas to match the VC org. & despite allied efforts to destroy the VC org, it will probably remain a viable structure for some time.

Why is the DRF in Paris?

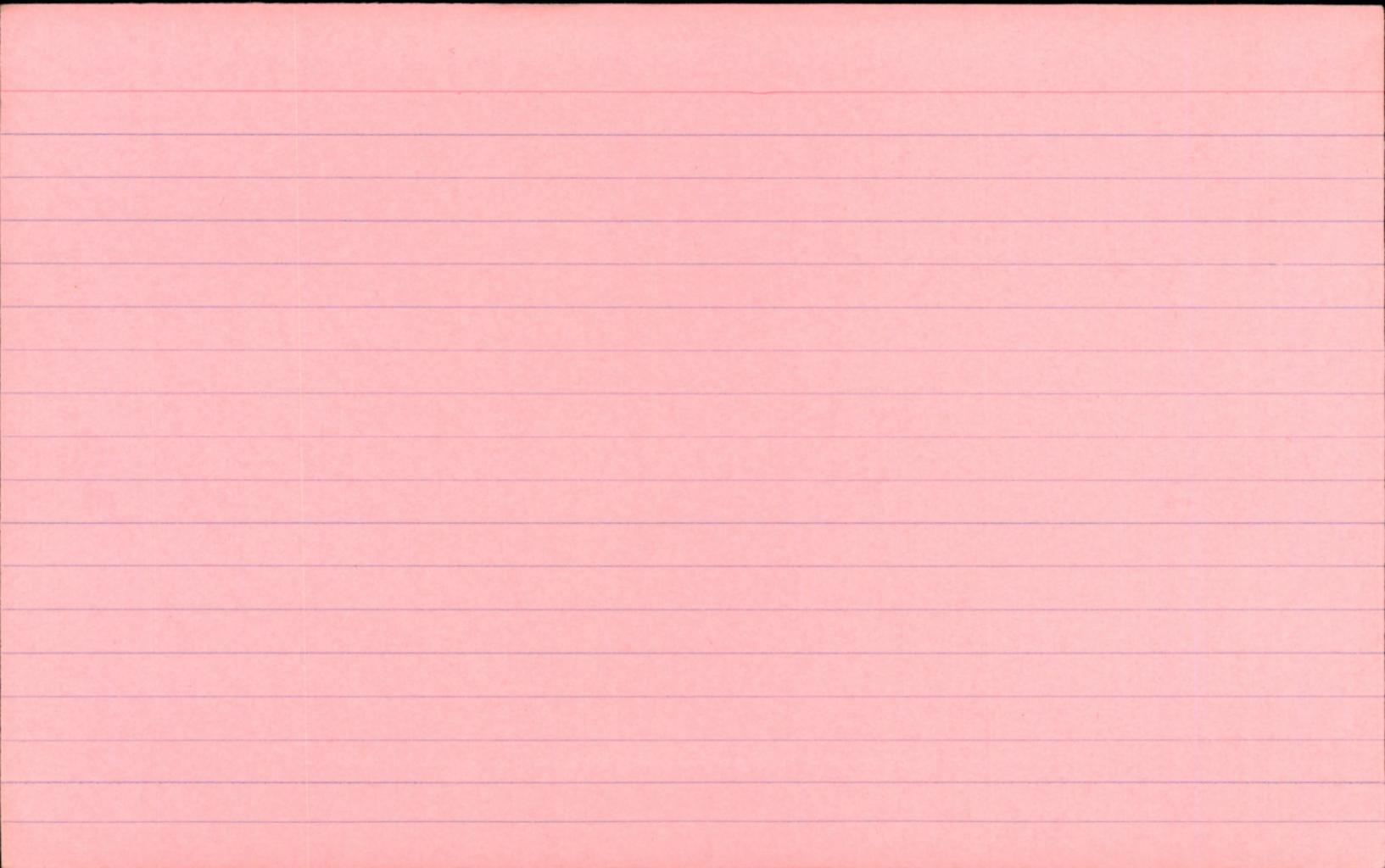
paraphrased

p. 77 Cannot win - although is not losing

Only way for NLF to gain power in SVN is by negotiation

US public is tiring

Need to reverse 1954



## Damage to CWS?

440

The adequacy of information on the overall scale & incidence of damage to CWS by air & artillery & looting and misbehavior by RVNAF.

The overall level of combat damage undoubtedly has been high. For example: the damage to these cities at Tet was considerable; there have been over two million refugees in SVN since 1964 - many of these were caused by combat activity; the US Navy alone reports they have destroyed almost 35,000 structures & damaged about 43,000 since 1964. While much of the destruction has been unavoidable due to enemy provocations and tactics, undoubtedly some destruction could have and can be avoided.

-- On occasion, P Thieu makes a ~~mis~~ verbal slip by referring to some gov - institution by its name during the Diem period. He has been quoted as to his belief that Diem ran an efficient administration. However, P Thieu has also given indications of his resolution to avoid the political Achilles heel of the Diem regime, its refusal to share power, & develop a political base....

In summary, there is a gradual expansion of the pol. arena to include additional elements to to give more power to legitimately elected reps of the people... A primary factor in this is, of course, the delicate balance bet enough US support to avoid collapse & a shortage to stimulate US action to handle problems alone.

threw

Am. influ. on Vietnamese politics

492-93

In considering the prospects for changes in the GVN & Am. leverage therefore it would be well to consider the proposition that the record of Am. exp. in VN is one that indicates a signal failure to direct the evolution of Vietnamese pol. life into desired channels. It is only at the outer limits, i.e. Sihanouk or Pres. Ngo Dinh Diem or, since 31 March 1968, raising serious doubts about Am. willingness to continue the war, that sufficient leverage has apparently been exerted to markedly influence but not direct the course of pol. events internally.

... the strong central position of the President in institutional terms as provided by an election process has afforded P. threw, starting with his base in the ml, the opportunity to consolidate his power & reduce the influence of his chief rivals Vice P. N. Ky and the generals who oppose him.

He has skillfully permitted the legislature (Upper & Lower House) to play a sig. role in the formulation of Govt policies & has created the broadest coalition of rules in SV's checkered existence as a sovereign state.

V'rese elites

Thieu & election

455-24

...constitutional order whose legit is barely accepted even by the elite who emerged victorious in its first elections...

Fractuated char. of V'rese pol. org.

...Otherwise, energies are focused upon a perpetual competitive struggle to gain status & dominance in V'rese pol. life without regard to the damage done to the nascent constitutional structure. In this regard, the consolidation of the Thieu presidency can be seen as a favorable offsetting stabilizing trend, as can the development of the leg. (Upper & Lower House) as a deliberative body with real powers to influence govt. actions.

effect of (mist takeover) in SVN

One View (INR) holds that such a settlement would be likely to bring Cambodian chaos into Hanoi's orbit at a fairly early stage, but that these developments would not necessarily unhang the rest of SE Asia. The judgment here is that Hanoi would be preoccupied, for a ~~time~~ time at least, with the task of consolidating (mist rule) in SVN & even in Laos & Cambodia the (mists) would rely in the first instance on political rather than military pressure to alter the situation in their favour. Elsewhere (mist political & military assets) probably would not be immediately strengthened, nor would the (mists) be likely to ~~rely~~ rely more heavily on armed violence than at present. Although neutralist sentiment would increase in several countries & US prestige would suffer, these developments would not cause SE Asian leaders to be

panicked into precipitate change in policy; although the degree of their steadfastness will depend on the role the US decided to play in post-war SE Asia. An argument used in support of this assessment is that many of the current crop of leaders are in sympathy with & fully committed to current US objectives relating to the security of SE Asia.

DOMINOES INR p 82

Paraphrased

What will impact be of loss of SVN on rest of S.E.Asia?

will come

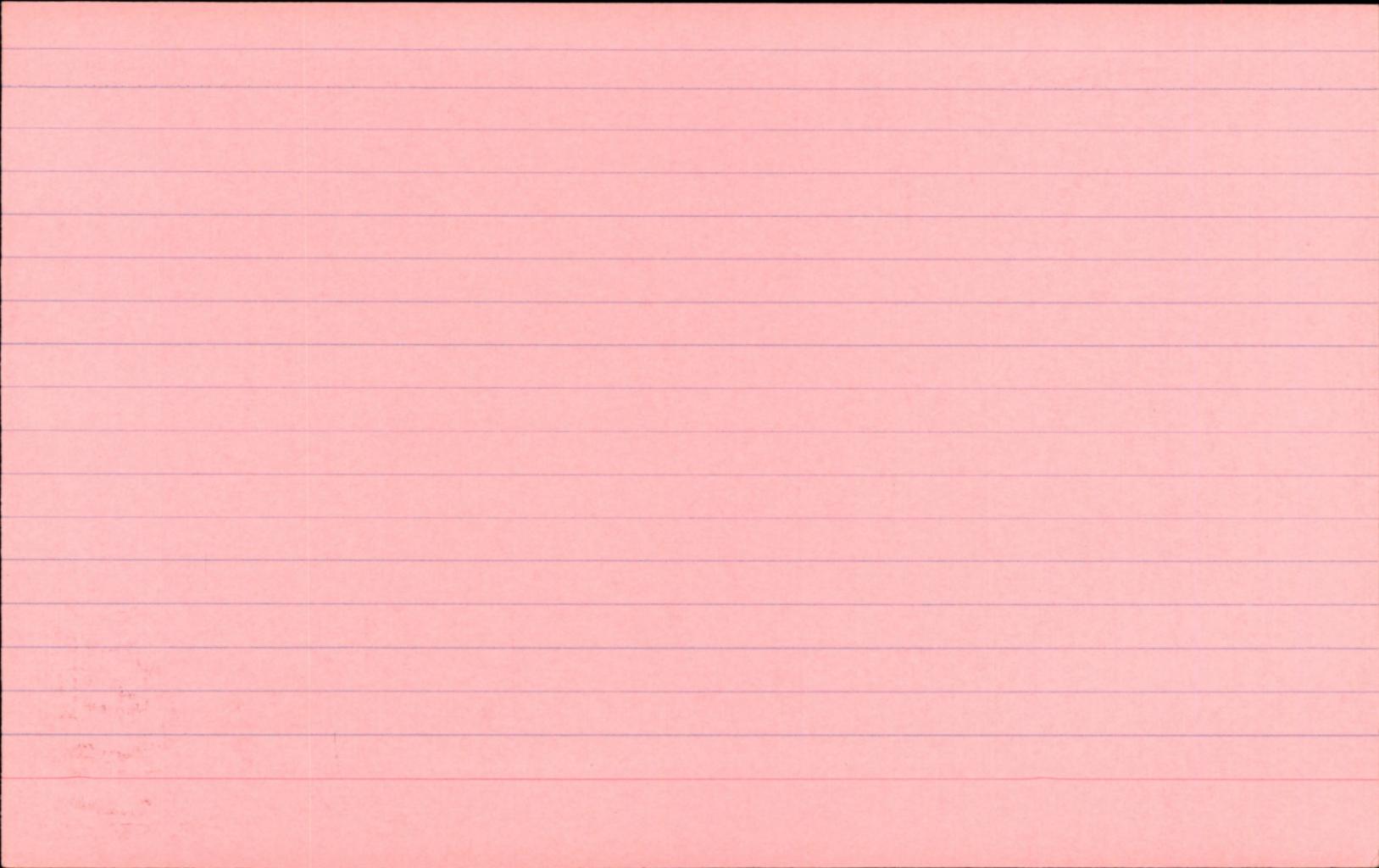
1. Laos and Cambodia/in Hanoi's orbit but not necessarily.the rest of Southeast Asia. N N will be using time for consolidation

or

2. Stimulate NVN to greater activity unless US makes major commitment."NVN does Peking's and Moscow's work."

Possible Thai accomodation unless US makes major commitment.

Concl. Communists would increase pressure and no-Coms could not resist



A solution favorable to Communists would not unhinge SE Asia. Maybe Laos and Cambodia. NVN will spend time consolidating.

Neutralism would increase.

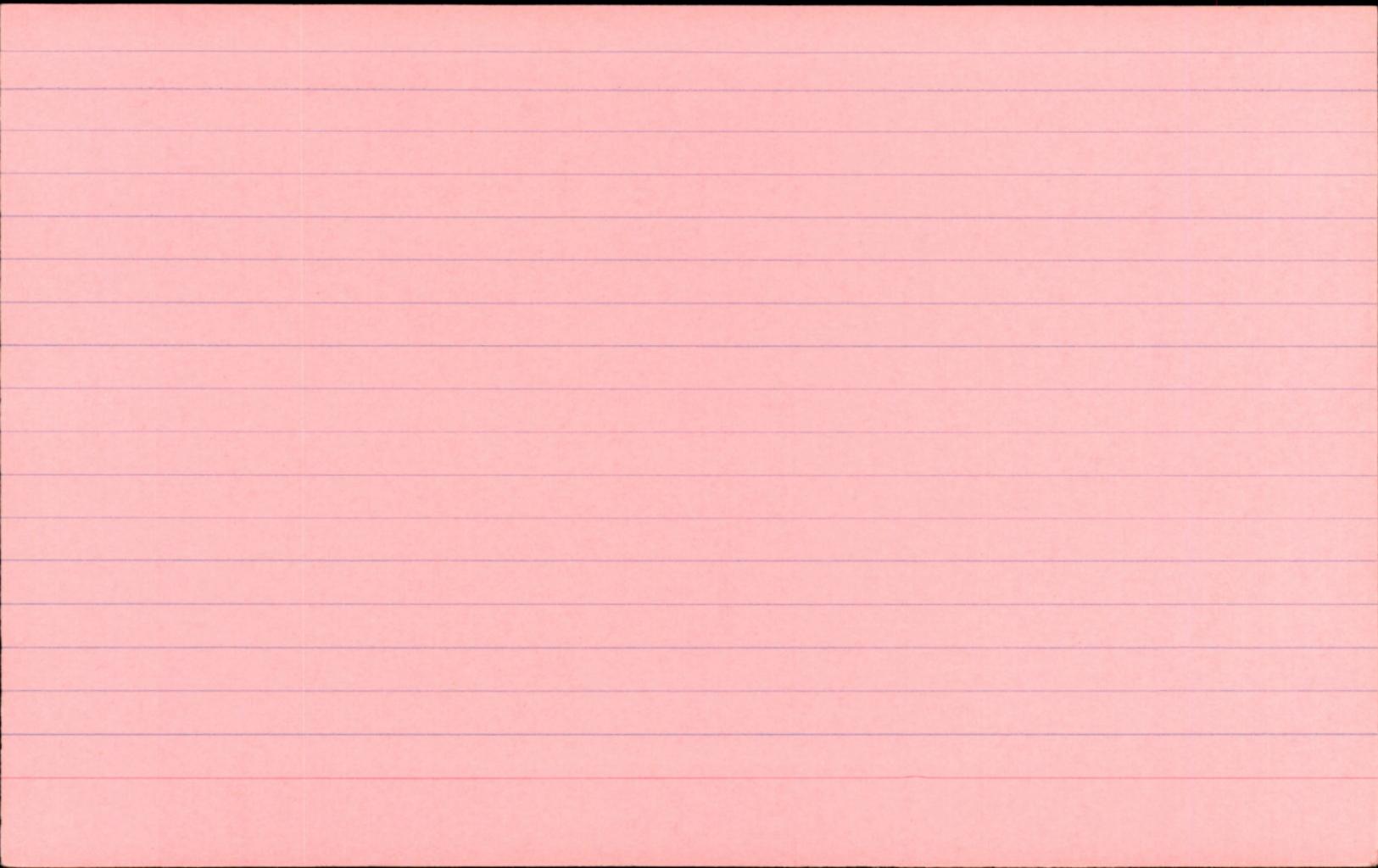
"These SE Asian leaders will not be panicked into precipitous policy changes, depending on US intentions."

p.87 Most governments could not move decisively against insurgents

Differing evaluations (NIE ~~50~~ 50-68)

"Outcome in SVN" not only answer. Other factors determining SEAsia outcome if there is a "bad" ~~south~~ solution:

- 1: NVN & Chinese postures re supporting insurgencies
2. Degree of involvement of Japan, USSR, INDIA, Australia, UK, France
- 3/ Individual reactions of countries to their specific internal situations



B-52's producing casualties?  
disrupting operations?

162

... There is little evidence to suggest that these HIS missions have succeeded in inflicting a scale of losses on the VCLNVA sufficient to significantly disrupt tactical operations or to force the Coms to alter their basic strategy for SVN. To some extent, moreover, the level of the effectiveness of the HIS missions does diminish as the enemy develops tactics to adjust to their destructive potential. Indeed, captured documents & PW & rallied statements often refer to early warning systems & experimentation with types of shelters & methods to avoid recurring patterns in B-52 strikes

Effect of Laotian interdiction bombing?

164

In reducing the capacity of the enemy logistic system?

The bombing has clearly imposed serious strains on the enemy's infiltration & logistic capabilities. It has made the movement far more difficult & no doubt slower than would be the case if there were no bombing. Also, it has probably reduced the potential flow of supplies that Hanoi could have put into SVN. However, despite our efforts to choke off the ~~flow~~ flow of supplies, the enemy has made effective use of by-passes, portages, water routes, night movement, additional trucks, & non-motorized transport, & has managed not only to keep the roads open & supplies moving but also to expand & improve ~~his~~ his logistics network. In short, our interdiction efforts in Laos do not appear to have weakened in any major way Communist capabilities to wage an

aggressive & protracted campaign in SVN as well as to support  
military operations vs RLG forces in Laos itself.

## Laotian interdiction - in destroying material in transit?

165

Until mid-1968, the Laotian interdiction bombing campaign concentrated on destroying trucks carrying material from NVWR through the Laotian panhandle to SVN. While this bombing placed heavy strains on NVWR's logistical capabilities, these obstacles did not prevent Hanoi from maintaining a flow of supplies sufficient to accommodate an expansion of CMR strength & an intensification of CMR military operations in the South, as demonstrated by the events of 1968. In mid-1968 the Allies changed the emphasis of the interdiction effort from destruction of material & trucks to blocking so-called "non-bypassable choke points," hoping in this fashion to stop the flow of material south. While ~~the~~ the present emphasis on choke points continues to hamper the enemy's ability to move supplies, truck movement in the Laotian panhandle is at the same high level this January as it was last

over

January, suggesting that once again the Allied effort is only taxing  
the Comint flow of material. As long as the Comists wish to pay  
this price, they can continue to move material South.

....

Unfortunately, the available intelligence indicators were relatively silent about the sig of these strains, i.e., about their cumulative ability to deter Hanoi from political & military policies unacceptable to the US. In theory, there was an upper limit to NVN's capacity simultaneously to continue the defense of the North & the big-unit war in the South. The bombing undoubtedly pushed Hanoi closer to ~~to~~ that limit, but it was not possible to determine precisely (1) where the limit lay, & (2) how far from it Hanoi was at any given time. Hanoi's decision to change from protracted war to the Tet offensive & then to negotiations may be seen as indications it was approaching that limit, but it obviously still had considerable reserve capacity at that time.

## Effect of Bombing NVA

167

What did become clear during the course of the bombing was that the NVNers had not been paralyzed. Hanoi found a variety of ways to minimize & adapt to the strains of the bombing. Foreign aid was perhaps the most important single element in this adaptation, but the striking tenacity of the NVNese leadership & the disciplined & fatalistic response of the NVNese people were of equal importance. Despite increasingly heavy bombing, the North continued to function. A high level of imports continued to be received & distributed, permitting ~~NVA~~ NVN to serve as "the great rear" for "the great frontline" in the South - the infiltration of men & supplies continued to increase from 1965 to the present.

bombing of North -

manpower problems.

168

The overall result therefore, was that the manpower situation began to weigh more & more heavily on Hanoi, until eased considerable by the March 31 bombing limitation. It should be noted, however, that there is no evidence that manpower shortages in themselves were becoming acute enough to prevent Hanoi from continuing its policies.

bombing of the North -  
economic aid?

171

The degree of relief provided by Soviet + Chinese aid cannot be quantified, but its importance is suggested by the fact that, whereas the bombing destroyed capital stock, military facilities, & current production in 1950 worth nearly \$ 500 million, Soviet + Chinese aid during this period was nearly \$ 2.9 billion, nearly 6 times as much.

## \* bombing of North -

174

war essential imports - how much by rail or road if  
Sea denied. & strong efforts  
even made to intercept ground  
transport?

### On the other hand

The NWers surprised many observers, & confounded many predictions,  
by holding the North together & simultaneously sending ever-increasing  
amounts of supplies & personnel into the South during 3 1/2 years  
of bombing. It is clear that the bombing campaign, as conducted,  
did not live up to the expectations of many of its proponents.  
With this experience in mind, there is little reason to believe that  
new bombing will accomplish what previous bombings failed to do,  
unless it is conducted with much greater intensity & readiness to defy  
criticism & risk of escalation.

bombing WVN -  
action of DRV to reduce ~~vulnerability~~ vulnerability of Hanoi 177

Thus beginning in early 1965, an extensive civil defense program was devised, which eventually provided some form of bomb shelter for virtually the entire Vietnamese pop. ~~Shelter progress~~

public Shelters, tunnels, individual shelters, earthwork tunnels leading from industrial plants, trenches near rice fields for agric. workers

rate of attrition & who controls it: Vietnamization 100

... we believe that to a considerable extent, the Coms are able to control the rate of attrition of their forces. First, they have retained a surprising degree of tactical initiative, even during periods of intense fighting. A DOD study, for example, has concluded that perhaps as many as 3/4ths of the engagements in SVN occur at VC/NVA tactical initiative. In addition to choosing the timing of the engagements the enemy is able to determine the type of attack, ranging from a costly assault on a major urban center to a relatively inexpensive harassment of a village or hamlet. Despite improvements in US/ARVN tactical planning, the NVA/VC have also proven that they can often break contact and escape into base areas or sanctuaries either within or outside SVN when the fighting in specific engagements has become too intense. Indeed, Communist tactical

planning, even since 1965 when the character of the fighting changed significantly, continues to place high priority on swift, surprise attacks, followed by quick withdrawals.

Finally, the communists retain the option of avoiding contact, again, even during periods of intense offensive operations by our side. For example, DOD studies of combat statistics show little relationships between the number & scale of Allied operations and the rate of estimated enemy combat deaths. Instead, such studies have found a strong relationship between the rate of NVA/VC attacks & their estimated casualties: VC/NVA combat deaths have been high during the periods of their offensives & have dropped during the cyclical so-called "combat lulls", regardless of the level of Allied military operations.

transport + supplies - ~~to~~ Cambodia

108

In our view, the Communists clearly have in the overland route a functioning logistic system in being which is capable of satisfying most of their needs + which is completely under their control, & it is therefore doubtful that they would place their main logistic channel under Cambodian control & make it ~~more~~ vulnerable to Sihanouk's will + to <sup>the</sup> political pressures in Phnom Penh.

VIETNAMIZATION p. 130 NSS

The Vietnamese Army has not escaped from its conventional warfare mold. Both in its military tactics and in its relations with the people it has all too often acted counter to the basic principles of counter insurgency rather than in support of them.

While some broadening would clearly be desirable, we do not believe the present regional balance should be upset nor should Huoung be replaced -- which limits what changes can actually be made at this ~~time~~ point. On the other hand, changes that are inconsequential politically could create an unfortunate picture of continuing ~~xxxxxx~~ division and weakness within the GVN.

On balance, we think the only "political" changes feasible at present would be the inclusion of relatively "safe" party leaders and former Presidential/Vice Presidential candidates such as RDV leader Ha Thuc Ky, or former Vice-Presidential candidate and still respected Phan Quang Dan, although he does not have a major political following now. Any attempts to include ~~more~~ militant "opposition" or "neutralist" elements would risk serious Northern/Catholic/RVNAF reaction. We would probably get nowhere if we attempted now to encourage such wider participation in any case and might merely confirm suspicions in certain Vietnamese leaders' minds that we are working for a "peace cabinet" or government of transition. This could unsettle the issue further.

To many, "victory" has meant the outright defeat of communist forces (both Viet Cong & NVA), or at least such heavy attrition of them that no alternative remained but their total and permanent withdrawal. It has also meant the destruction or dissolution of the entire communist political apparatus. There is now growing realization that victory in these ~~XXXXX~~ terms is unattainable and that the inexorable trend is toward some compromise settlement of hostilities and some kind of political competition thereafter. In this situation, a strong non-communist political role becomes a necessity for any satisfactory outcome.

P.16A

Any reduction in the level of our own military effort without a corresponding reduction in presence and activity of North Vietnamese forces may reduce the likelihood that the GVN would work toward political mobilization. (SKS note: om p. on p. 160 "political mobilization" is considered to be the most critical type of governmental "change" needed to obtain "victory".)

In general, the GVN would not seem to run unacceptable risks in making or attempting any of these ~~ext~~ changes (see note below); the problem, rather, is whether the GVN has the will and the ability to make them and whether they can be made in time to do much good. Some risks have already been noted possibly attending any significant effort at broadening the GVN at the national level. Area where US influence may be required have also been indicated (in Question 22).

(Note: The "changes, so necessary to "victory" are broadening the GVN, merit system, and political mobilization?

In general terms, US influence in the political sphere has often been misunderstood and its impact at times overrated. Our support for governments and programs has been interpreted as support for their leaders of the moment or their initiators (e.g., Nguyen Khanh, Nguyen Cao Ky, Nguyen Duc Thang), whether or not this was the case. And there are many politicians outside the GVN who profess to believe that the Embassy and CAS are behind every shift in policy, change in personnel, or ~~another~~ political development even when this is patently not the case. These circumstances argue for caution and circumspection as we seek to wield political influence, and for a sure understanding of what the exercise of such influence can entail--e.g. our responsibility for what follows after we intervene, as seen

not only through the eyes of the Vietnamese themselves but of other allies and friends as well. This does not mean that we should not make the effort (since we will frequently be damned whether we have made the effort or not), only that we should be clear about the risks and responsibilities entailed for us therein.

Allies must raise troops to 1.5 million to assure attrition unacceptable to enemy.  
"We cannot win either"

p.365 Enemy determines enemy attrition.

No relationship between Allied operations on either enemy or US deaths



MACV estimates that the enemy's ~~total~~ gains & losses in SVN roughly balanced out for the year of 1968. If it is assumed that the enemy can infiltrate a recruit approx. 300,000 men a year, then allied forces would have to attrit the enemy at the rate of 25,000 per month. Present operations (those since Sept to Dec. 1968) have attrited on average of about 18,000 per month. This difference of 7,000 men per month is not because the allied force level is inadequate but because the enemy chooses not to engage.

The enemy has access to sufficient manpower to meet his replacement needs for at least the next several years, even at the high 1968 loss rate of 891,000.

Even at the all time high enemy loss rates (340,000 annual rate) during the first 6 months of 1968, the Viet Cong (VC) / NVESD NVA could replenish their forces for more than 4 yrs. by depleting 33% of their joint pool of able bodied manpower.

At 4th quarter 1968 rates, VC/NVA infiltration/recruitment is running about 170,000 per year & 50% are enemy losses, ... the enemy can maintain this rate of losses almost indefinitely without any sig. depletion of his total man power pool.

Attrition - rate

359

1. How long?

Assuming that the NVA replenishes VC losses after the VC run out of manpower, it would take 13 years to ~~to~~ exhaust the manpower pool, 6.5 yrs to cut it in half, & 4.4 yrs. to deplete it by a third.

moreover, it is unlikely that the high enemy loss rates of Jan. -- June 1968 could be maintained by allied forces unless: (1) the enemy generates massive Tet offensive type attacks; (2) allied forces becomes much more efficient & effective; and/or (3) allied force levels are increased greatly.

enemy calculates casualties - strong relationship bet. the level of attacks & the level of enemy casualties.

withdrawal ~~is~~ a stalemate

rel bet allied operations & enemy casualties: - kill ratio 360  
+  
casualties

Unfortunately, there is little or no relationship between the tempo of allied operations & fluctuations in enemy (or US) combat deaths. Thus, unless allied commanders can wrest the initiative from him, the enemy can be expected to control his losses within a broad range.

— to attrit — "it would take more than 3 million allied troops to raise the early rate of 340,000 enemy losses, assuming the enemy continues to avoid contact & allied efficiency remains constant.

unlikely enemy combat death rate per 1000 allied troops would increase as more troops were added

364

In terms of total armed men, the allies outnumbered the enemy about 6 to 1 at the end of 1968, but the allies had only a slight advantage over the enemy in terms of combat troops on offensive operations - 61

25% allied troops tied down protecting key areas, loss of communication  
or pacification operations - enemy's small logistic & defensive requirements -

As a result, allied forces committed to offensive operations only slightly  
outnumber the enemy troops in maneuver battalions; in terms of  
rifle platoon manpower the 2 sides are nearly equal.

- casualty rates & allies

365

statistical analysis supports the hypothesis that the enemy exercises the greatest share in the control of the rates of enemy attrition. The allies never have persistently imposed significant losses on enemy forces when he has sought to avoid them.

Little or no relationship exists between the tempo of allied operations and fluctuations in either enemy or US combat deaths. A significant increase in allied operations is not accompanied by a significant increase in enemy or allied combat deaths, nor does a reduction in allied operations reduce deaths.

Allies & VC → mobile offensive operation

382

.... Despite an increase in the level of mobile, offensive operations during 1968, approx. 85% of all contacts in SVN are initiated by the enemy --- Furthermore, VC & NVA regular forces can still freely strike most areas in SVN, though with the risk of incurring increased losses over 1967